



NOAA
FISHERIES

In 2017, 79,400 anglers took approximately 337,500 fishing trips in Puerto Rico. Of those anglers, 96 percent were residents and 4 percent were visitors.

U.S. Caribbean Recreational Fisheries

PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Thriving recreational and subsistence fisheries are integral to life in island communities across the Caribbean. Recreational fishing makes important economic contributions through tourism and major international fishing tournaments. Subsistence fishing provides a healthy source of seafood and preserves intergenerational and traditional practices that reflect the unique and diverse cultures of the Caribbean region. With many species of fish available throughout the year, opportunities await saltwater anglers in the Caribbean. While some species like red hind (mero cabrilla), mutton snapper (sama), and black grouper (mero negro) have specific seasons, many others like mackerels (sierra), dolphin (dorado), wahoo, mangrove snapper (pargo prieto), and yellowtail snapper (colirrubia) can be caught year-round. NOAA Fisheries partners and collaborates with the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and the natural resource agencies of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to manage fisheries in the federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean.

POPULAR RECREATIONAL SPECIES



Angler with hogfish

2017 Species/ Group	Total Catch (number of fish)	HARVESTED RELEASED	Caught in Territorial Waters*	Caught in Federal Waters
Jacks	284,900	NA	NA	NA
Other snappers	99,600		98%	2%
Lane snapper	88,400		100%	0%
Yellowtail Snapper	56,100		100%	0%
Dolphinfish	31,400		72%	28%
King Mackerel	20,000		100%	0%
Barracudas	15,400		100%	0%
Groupers	12,300		100%	0%
Tuna	7,500		92%	8%
Atlantic tarpon	3,300		81%	19%
Blue marlin**	600		0%	100%

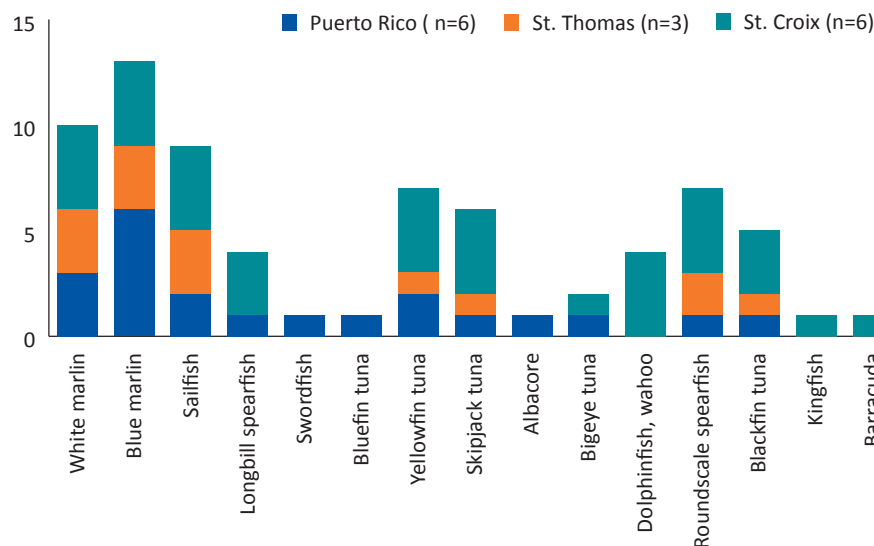
*Puerto Rico territorial waters extend from 0-9 miles offshore. Recreational catch data (excluding tournament harvest) are not available in the U.S. Virgin Islands. **All blue marlin were released alive

Hurricanes in the U.S. Caribbean

The 2017 hurricane season was one of the costliest on record. Hurricanes Irma and Maria were two major hurricanes that caused significant damage to Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands as it made landfall in September 2017. Both land and marine based infrastructure were severely damaged across the region. The hurricanes also disrupted the collection of recreational fisheries data. In February 2018, the Secretary of Commerce declared a fishery disaster for Florida, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands due to the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. As the islands recover, NOAA Fisheries will continue to play an active role in determining the impacts following Hurricanes Irma and Maria on the recreational sector and support recreational fishing opportunities in the Caribbean.

The impact to Puerto Rico is estimated at \$15.4 million in damages to fishing operations and businesses and revenue losses of \$5.1 million. It's estimated that 174 jobs were lost in the short term. The impact to USVI fishing operations and businesses is \$6.1 million and revenue losses of \$3.2 million. It's estimated that 46 jobs were lost in the short term. Fishing is important to the U.S. Caribbean islands for economic and cultural reasons. Residents and visitors alike depend on fishing and healthy fish stocks to support their livelihoods and recreational pursuits.

2017 FISHING TOURNAMENTS IN THE U.S. CARIBBEAN



Source: Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Tournament Database

Diving Deeper

ISLAND-BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

In 2020, a new island-based fishery management approach will be implemented by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries. The island-based fishery management plans sometime in 2020. Island-based FMPs will be structured by island or island group (Puerto Rico, St. Croix, St. Thomas/St. John), rather than by species, to allow managers to better consider the differences in culture, markets, gears, and seafood preferences among the U.S. Caribbean islands. These new plans include harvest reference points (i.e., annual catch limits and targets) for dolphinfish and other newly added pelagic species such as wahoo. Moving forward, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council will consider other management measures such as bag and size limits as appropriate and necessary. These island-based fishery management plans (FMPs) will allow NOAA, the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, the United States Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, and the fishermen to continue to work together as partners to maintain sustainable levels of dolphinfish for anglers to access for generations.

LEARN MORE

In the Caribbean, NOAA Fisheries works closely with the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and government entities from the territories and U.S.-affiliated islands across the region.

For more information visit www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast.

Sean Meehan, Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and U.S. Caribbean Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, sean.meehan@noaa.gov, (727) 824-5330

Kim Amendola, Southeast Recreational Fishing and Communications Specialist, kim.amendola@noaa.gov, (727) 551-5707

Ken Brennan, Southeast Fisheries Science Center Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov, (252) 728-8618

